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assertion. There is far more in Taussig than all persons must accept than there is in Mill. Taussig handles more problems that are of vital significance than does Mill. Taussig's logic is better than Mill's; his style is as clear, and, if not so even, is on the average, perhaps, as effective. None the less, the reading of Mill used to mark an epoch in men's lives. Few, I believe, will ever say this of the reading of Taussig.

And this, it appears to the reviewer, is due to causes for the most part extrinsic to the author and his methods. Economics is in part a science; in part it is a creed; and through the last century, it has largely been the creed of the middle class, a party, to be sure, but one that identified itself with society. What was essential in this creed, we all know, was the affirmation of the sufficiency of an enlightened self-interest as a basis for economic, social, and political organization. In its revolutionary vigor it found expression in the work of Adam Smith. John Stuart Mill's work is an expression of the creed grown self-confident, triumphing over the minds of all men of enlightenment. These books therefore counted, and will continue to count so long as men desire to understand the main currents of thought of a mighty century.

Professor Taussig is also an adherent of the liberal view, an expounder of its creed. But in his thought, enlightened individualism works well, "for the most part," "as a rule," "when properly qualified." His is a creed over-rationalized. It reminds one of those modern religious creeds that do not conflict with science or with anything else. They do not lead us into absurdities, but they work no important changes of heart. Professor Taussig's book is full of practical wisdom. Economist and layman will alike read it with pleasure and with profit. Both will pronounce it a good book; and it will leave both cold.

ALVIN S. JOHNSON

LELAND STANFORD JUNIOR UNIVERSITY

Principles of Rural Economics. By THOMAS NIXON CARVER.

Boston: Ginn & Co., 1911. 8vo, pp. xx+386. \$1.30.

Professor Carver has again demonstrated his versatility in the general field of economic and sociological science by this contribution on what he calls "some of the salient features of the rural problem." In the author's own opinion, the volume "emphasizes the public and social aspects of the problem somewhat more, and the business aspect somewhat less, than do most treatises on this subject." He mentions as a "partial defense for his presumption in writing on so large and difficult

a problem" the fact of his own farm rearing in the upper Mississippi Valley, his personal experience in independent farming on the Pacific coast, travel to the extent of a good many thousand miles among the farms of this country and of Europe, and lastly several years' experience in the teaching of rural economics in Harvard University.

Chap. ii, "Sketch of Modern Agriculture," which we may consider first, is in the main excellent. Two questions may be raised however: (1) Notwithstanding the vital relation of any true theory of rural economics—as of the theory of economics in general—to history, is it advisable to include the history in the same volume with the theory? This arrangement would be more acceptable were the result not so often—as in the present case—seriously to limit some of the theoretical parts on account of lack of space. (2) Granting the propriety of including the historical material, is it advisable to interject it, as in the present volume, into the midst of the other matter? In the judgment of the reviewer the history should have come either at the beginning or at the end of the volume. Exception may be taken, also, to some of the statements in that part of this chapter relating to the United States (which is, apparently, a summary of the author's "Historical Sketch of American Agriculture" in Bailey's *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture*, IV, 39 ff.). It is hardly correct to say that there were "few changes in agricultural implements until after 1833" (p. 82). The grain cradle, which probably represented, in real economy, a greater gain over the old sickle than the reaper did over the grain cradle, had by 1833 been in use for a generation. The cast-iron plow, too, had previously come into quite general use. Moreover, the year 1833 has only formal importance as marking an epoch in the use of farm machinery, as it was not until about 1845 and 1850 respectively that the reaper and the mower began to come into general use. Again, the fact that the twine-binder became a practical success for the first time in the harvest of 1879, or perhaps of 1880 (see *Farm Implement News*, September 22, 1882, p. 16), precludes the effect ascribed to it of increasing the per-capita production of wheat in the United States from 5.6 bushels in 1860 to 9.2 bushels in 1880 (p. 99). Doubtless a small part of this credit should be assigned to the wire-binder. Other similar discrepancies occur.

In chap. i, on "General Principles," reference is made to the "transcendent" but relatively decreasing importance of agriculture and to the effect of its seasonal character in diversifying the farmer's labor. The effect of the domestic and self-employing character of the farmers' work in producing harmony between business and family ideals and in afford-

ing a common business interest among all the members of the family, with the ultimate result of making the rural family a stable institution as compared with the city family, is well brought out. The author further discusses the rural districts as the seed-bed of the population, condemns the assumption of urban superiority, and indicates isolation as the characteristic menace of farm life.

In chap. iii, "Factors of Agricultural Production," a great deal of stress is laid upon methods of "economizing" land, labor, and capital. With the exception of a few disproportions and contradictions, and of instances of overemphasis upon Ricardian or Malthusian formulae, the chapter is well done. The author greatly fears that economy in the use of land by increased intensivity of cultivation will, under the operation of the law of diminishing returns, result in a lower standard of life, overpopulation, and generally undesirable social conditions; forgetting here, in his warning against peasant agriculture, the example of Denmark, with her minute farms, highly intensive methods of cultivation, and intelligent co-operation, which he cites so approvingly and so "thoughtlessly holds up to our admiration" elsewhere (pp. 156, 357). It is implied (pp. 125, 129) that lack of improvement in agriculture leads to migration of rural populations and to urbanization: whereas, in reality, improvement of methods in agriculture, as a result of which a smaller proportion has been able to feed a constantly increasing proportion of the total population, has been perhaps the main cause of urbanization; and the asserted fact that rural migration has been uniformly from a densely to a sparsely settled territory (p. 125) is, in the reviewer's judgment, proof of relative and not of absolute scarcity of land. In making the distinction between agriculture and manufactures that the former depends upon "land" while the latter depends upon "markets" (pp. 115-21), a real difference is described in terms that are unfortunately chosen. Markets have become vital even in agriculture; while the existence of extremely high land values in manufacturing and commercial centers indicates a high degree of scarcity of land, and this condition is not the less seriously to be regarded because it does not square with certain ideals of economic propriety (p. 122). In discussing bad physical, bad chemical, and bad political conditions as causes of waste land, the author—forgetting his Mississippi Valley origin and betraying his New England environment—devotes nearly six pages to a consideration of stony land, while to each of the two subjects of remedying bad chemical and bad political conditions he devotes about two and a half pages. He finds in the question whether to economize labor or land a dilemma,

because "the maximum economy of labor is secured by means of a use of land so extensive as to seem almost wasteful, whereas the maximum economy of land is secured by an application of labor so lavish as to be wasteful of that factor" (p. 188). He fails to recognize, however, that what primarily concerns the agriculturist as such is not diminishing physical product but diminishing value product and that additional labor will not be added to the same piece of land except under conditions where agricultural produce would so rise in price as to make that labor profitable; and this would seem to require that the resulting conditions, as they affect the standard of living, be interpreted in general social terms and not, as according to the author, in relation to the agricultural class alone. In discussing capital as a factor in agricultural production, the author does not advance materially beyond a general treatment of capital except in reference to the one point of the "law of proportionality"—i.e., that "the different forms of capital must be combined in the best proportions"—which he illustrates by a consideration of the most economic adjustment between the size of a plow and the size and number of horses in the team.

In chap. iv, "Management as a Factor in Agricultural Production," questions of investment, of supervision, administration, and scientific management, and of buying and selling are discussed. Of the considerable number of topics included under these main heads, some are well handled while others are worthy of much more adequate treatment. The discussion of farm credit suffers from a surplus of historical material; while in the consideration of speculation in farm produce, the farmer and his interests seem to drop largely out of sight. The author favors public markets in large cities and the establishment of the parcels post as means to limit the profits of middlemen to an equivalence with the services really performed.

Chap. v, "Distribution of Agricultural Income," is disappointing. The author contents himself, in the main, with developing the general theories of wages, interest, rent, and profits, with relatively little application to the special conditions obtaining in agriculture. He submits some data on "what becomes of the price paid by the consumer," and excuses the lack of formal treatment with the surprising statement that "this problem cannot be reduced to general principles, but must be solved for each particular locality"—an unsatisfactory and untenable position in regard to a subject of vital importance.

The author discusses "Problems of Rural Social Life," in the last chapter (chap. vi), parts of which are excellent, but other parts of which are, in the reviewer's judgment, among the least satisfactory in the

whole volume. The emphasis is upon the problem of "maintaining the capacity of the rural population for civilization," and the solution of this problem is said to depend upon two questions: (1) "Is it the most or the least capable individuals who marry earliest and have the largest families? (2) Is it the most or the least capable individuals who leave the farm and migrate to the city?" (p. 336). He declares that "the general abandonment of the ambition of the family builder will prove disastrous to the race," and holds that "so long as the rural population is improving there is no danger of national decay, or of a decline of civilization." The instrumentality through which it is hoped to induce young men and women of talent to remain on the farm is the making of rural life attractive to them, and this cannot be accomplished unless farm life offers opportunities for a liberal income, for agreeable social life, and for intellectual enjoyment. In this general view, the urban population is apparently given over as hopeless, and it seems to be assumed that that portion of our population has no worthy contribution to make to the ideals of our civilization. Independence of the standards of the city dwellers is urged, though the author does not go quite so far as to recommend that our cities be pulled down. In the opinion of the reviewer, much of this is impossible or improbable even if it were desirable. It is useless to expect that country ideals are not to be influenced, and influenced largely, by city ideals, whether for good or for ill. It may be said, too, that for many obvious reasons the country needs the city. We may join in a modified way in the wish that the most capable and efficient elements of the population be the family builders, but there is probably inevitable conflict between ambition for family building and the maintenance of the standard of living in general, except on some such untenable assumption as that of the interference of authority to enforce equal standards of life for the efficient and the inefficient prerequisite to marriage. Much fuller assent may be given to the author's program for the improvement of country life. It is a question, however, whether he does not go too far in emphasizing mere productive efficiency in his appeal that the country church give more emphasis to the ordinary affairs of life. Dissent must also be expressed from the conclusion that in considering how the rural school may be made a factor in developing a more wholesome and agreeable social life in the country it is unnecessary to consider the rural-school curriculum (p. 360). So to transform the rural-school curriculum as to educate the country child in the subject-matter of his immediate environment would, not to speak of other extremely important results, lay the basis for almost unlimited opportunities to improve country life on the social side.

Some general criticisms suggest themselves. One of these relates to the occasional occurrence of "lecturisms," for which the classroom is no doubt responsible. An illustration occurs on p. 6 where the stock exchange is described as a place "where men in every stage of corpulency and physical unfitness are furiously buying and selling. . . ." Another criticism relates to the fundamentally important question as to the scope of what we may call rural or agricultural economics. Is it or is it not a peculiar kind of economics? If there are no fundamentally new economic laws involved, why should not the theorist in rural economics take these fundamental laws for granted and content himself with pointing out their application under the special conditions that exist in agriculture? Is it necessary to reconstruct from the ground up the general theory relating to capital, rent, interest, profits, etc? These questions of general theory are usually well handled by the author but occupy so much space as to result in their inadequate application to agricultural conditions. A similar unfortunate catholicity has induced the author to pronounce upon certain moot points involving methods of social reform, which are necessarily inadequately treated. One case involves the Socialist's attitude toward capital, where he fails to make clear that the Socialist is hostile, not to capital, but to the capitalist. Socialism is also admittedly not a "salient feature" of the rural problem. Neither does the single tax find its chief importance in regard to agricultural land values. Inheritance and benefiting by a rise in land values may be, in the minds of some, "uneconomic ways of getting a living"; but there are important considerations that certainly merit examination before an *ex cathedra* pronouncement, and failing this examination the pronouncement should not be made at all.

It is thus possible to commend many features of this volume, while at the same time there are numerous features to which exception must be taken. The original and vigorous treatment of the subject, however, is stimulating to a high degree and is calculated to provoke discussion and the expression of opinion and thus to lead to further development in a comparatively new field. While the critical reader will close the volume with the feeling that a standard treatise or type of treatise on rural economics still remains to be written, he will feel—in spite of faults of omission and commission—that the effort of Professor Carver is worth while.

The volume contains a fair bibliography, but the index is inadequate.

JOHN G. THOMPSON

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS